



Meeting Notes

Place: Zoom Meeting

Date: April 8, 2021

Project #: 58538.00

Notes Taken by: Karen Sentoff

Re: Richmond Bridge Street Alternatives Presentation and Public Meeting

ATTENDEES

Jason Charest – CCRPC
Ravi Venkataraman – Richmond Town Planner
Cathleen Gent – Transportation Committee
Fran Huntoon – Resident
Sai Sarepalli – CCRPC
Allen Knowles – Transportation Committee
Ian Stokes – Bike Pedestrian Trails Study Committee
Jon Kart – Transportation Committee
Gary Bressor – Resident
Jenn Conley – VHB
Karen Sentoff – VHB
Chris Granda – Resident

Jason provided a brief introduction and public comment period. Introductions were made. Jenn provided a brief overview of the study focal areas and the purpose and need. Karen introduced the alternatives developed for the first segment of the corridor, focusing on Bridge Street between Railroad Street and Main Street.

Alternative 1 was presented, which includes new segment of sidewalk on the west side in front of Richmond Market, new sidewalk on the east side between Jolina Court and the end of the existing sidewalk, and shared lanes on Bridge Street. This option limits impact beyond the existing edge of pavement. This option also included a new crosswalk on the south side of the intersection with Pleasant Street / Depot Street and retains the midblock crossing at the commercial block.

Alternative 2 was presented, which includes new segment of sidewalk on the west side in front of Richmond Market, new sidewalk on the east side between Jolina Court and the end of the existing sidewalk, and a new uphill bike lane on the east side. This option also included a new pedestrian bumpout and crossing on the north side of the intersection with Pleasant Street / Depot Street with the intention of replacing the midblock crossing at the commercial block.

Allen asked if we move the midblock crossing to the corner of Pleasant Street, is the equipment (RRFB) moving with it? Could we add a speed hump or some other traffic calming to that block? Challenge to address the drivers as they turn on to Bridge Street given the current use of the parcels right at the intersection with Main Street. Drivers do enter a very narrow section where the parking is, and perhaps even more narrow with the new alternative which may provide some calming effect.



Cathleen asked for clarification on the slope impact between Alternatives 1 and 2. Alternative 1 holds close to the existing edge of pavement, and therefore does not have a slope impact. Alternative 2 has a slope impact anticipated to be as shown in the figure. To minimize this impact, a short retaining wall could be used to reduce the impact along this slope. Cathleen asked if the sidewalk as proposed would be curbed. Yes, this sidewalk would be raised from the roadway and curbed with ADA ramps as appropriate.

Alternative 3 was presented, which includes new segment of sidewalk on the west side in front of Richmond Market, new shared use on the east side between Jolina Court and Main Street. This could be a 10' path between Jolina Court and Pleasant Street, but would have to narrow to an 8' path between Pleasant Street and Main Street. This option also included a mountable curb extension on the corner of Railroad Street and a crossing on the north side of the intersection with Railroad Street.

Fran asked for a clarification on the shared use path. Is the intention for the shared use path to be vertically separated from the roadway? Yes, there would be a vertical curb between the road surface and the path. It would be possible to change the surface treatment to make it clear that both bikes and pedestrians are welcome to use the shared use path.

Ian supports the full use of the ROW, particularly on the east side. He also offered that the Railroad Street intersection is uncomfortable for pedestrian and supports the crossing on the north side to help calm the intersection.

Chris had concerns about the mixed uphill and downhill bicyclists on the shared use path.

Gary voiced support for the uphill bike lane with pedestrian improvements in Alternative 2. He also likes the midblock crossing. He offered that a retaining wall instead of a slope in front of NOFA could be a really attractive feature. He envisions this wall as being the right height to sit on.

Allen asked if there could be a mix and match of crossings that are proposed and already exist. The discussion of potentially replacing the midblock crossing with the crossing on the north side of the Pleasant Street intersection ensued.

Jon supports dedicating space for bikes uphill. He likes that moving the midblock crossing has the potential to add a parking space, but asked how many people would actually walk to the end of the block to cross. He is concerned with folks crossing the middle of the block anyway given the uses on each side. He expressed his support for the east side sidewalk.

An example of the mountable curb extension was provided.

Jason asked if the crosswalk in Alternative 3 is only enabled by the tightened curb and mountable curb extension. This crossing could be implemented in either case, but there are traffic calming and crossing benefits with the mountable curb.



Cathleen expressed support for the curb extension idea. She likes that it still accommodates the trucks while slowing other folks down. She asked for a clarification on the cost – was the retaining wall considered in the cost for this? No, the cost that is in the matrix is an estimate based on the slope, not the retaining wall concept.

An evaluation matrix of the three alternatives for the Bridge Street corridor between Railroad Street and Main Street was presented.

Jason asked a clarifying question about drainage. The curb line is brought in further than the existing edge of pavement in Alternatives 1 and 3, likely requiring relocation of drainage structures. In Alternative 2, the curb line is further out and may not require as significant of a relocation effort.

Cathleen asked about whether the retaining wall was included in the cost for Alternatives 2 and 3?

Ian was not in favor of the shared use path option.

Sai asked what was included in the costs. The cost estimates in the evaluation matrix included construction costs, engineering and design, contingencies, etc., but do not include any ROW acquisition.

A poll question was raised regarding which alternative the attendees supported. There was unanimous support for Alternative 2 with the west side sidewalk segment, east side sidewalk between Jolina Court and the existing sidewalk, and an uphill bike lane.

Jenn asked if there were components of other alternatives that folks would like to see incorporated into Alternative 2.

Cathleen offered that she would like to see the curb extension Railroad Street added to Alternative 2.

Chris agreed.

The question of whether the fourth crosswalk at the intersection with Railroad Street should be added to the curb extension in the preferred alternative.

Allen agreed.

Fran offered that her concerns with the crossings at Railroad Street are around whether drivers will have trouble recognizing two different crossings as they come through the intersection.

The question was raised as to whether the crosswalk at Pleasant Street would be sufficient for the crossing at the commercial block.

Fran mentioned that the creemee window is a big attraction at the Northern Spruce and could add to the crossing pedestrian traffic along the commercial block.

A poll of the preferred crossing locations was administered. The Railroad Street and Pleasant Street crossings are the most supported.



The discussion turned to the intersection alternatives at the Bridge Street / Huntington Road / Cochran Road / Thompson Road intersection. Karen presented the three intersection alternatives, which included Alternative 1 with an all-way stop condition for the intersection, Alternative 2 with a new two-way stop configuration for the Thompson Road and Bridge Street approaches, and Alternative 3 with a new 90' mini-roundabout at the intersection.

Cathleen asked if 90' is large enough diameter for a roundabout here? Yes, the mini-roundabout would still accommodate large vehicles making the through movements today, but by design they would have to mount the mountable center island and the curb extensions.

Ian expressed concerns about the stop line position on the Huntington Road leg in Alternatives 1 & 2.

Gary supports roundabouts. Concerned with the roundabout in Williston since drivers can drive straight through without having to slow down.

Discussion of the features of the roundabout including

Allen asked about the design speed of the roundabout as it is laid out. The Middlebury roundabout slows traffic sufficiently. He shared that his experience with roundabouts is with the ones in Olney, NY, which you could navigate at 15 mph. He expressed that the ones there felt unsafe for pedestrians. If we can't slow the traffic sufficiently with the roundabout, then he would support the 4-way stop.

Jon asked about winter maintenance of the mountable center island.

Fran likes the Manchester roundabout that was shared as an example. Feels like you have to slow down to navigate. It is nice to have pedestrian crossings set back too.

An evaluation matrix of the alternatives for the intersection was discussed.

Ian has concerns with the stop bar position on Huntington Road are mainly as a cyclist. With the set back as shown, getting up to speed to make the movement through the intersection may be problematic. He also suggested that the two-way stop pattern would be confusing given the current traffic pattern.

Gary's observation is that folks coming from Cochran Road stop well beyond the stop line if they stop at all. Wondering if there is a way to tighten that corner between Cochran and Bridge Street more than shown. He also asked if there was a cost difference between the 2-way and 4-way stop. If not, his preference is a 4-way stop.

Allen offered that the concern with the set back of the stop bar on Huntington Road could be alleviated with a green box.

Jon has observed this intersection. Say there are 40-50 cars every bike that is processed through the intersection. Concerned that the 4-way stop may be met with some opposition. A discussion of tightening up the intersection and making it feel more like a typical intersection ensued.



Gary is concerned that there is confusion of who has the right of way in the existing condition because of the odd configuration.

Allen suggested that we look elsewhere, like Amsterdam, for inspiration. They have made the decision to prioritize bikes and pedestrians. He suggested that folks need to be able to get around without a car.

A poll question was presented to the group regarding their preference for each of the intersection alternatives. The vote was split with 67% supporting the Alternative 1 with the all-way stop condition and 33% supporting the mini-roundabout.

Cathleen offered that she likes the roundabout and acknowledged the public resistance and high price tag that come with that option. She suggested that if this was the best alternative, the town could likely find the funding to make it happen. She said that making this intersection feel more like a four-way intersection would be an improvement.

Jason offered that public acceptance of the roundabout comes with familiarity. He noted that when folks are polled before and after a roundabout is installed in their area, they tend to increase their acceptance with higher ratings post installation.

Cathleen likes the idea of making this more of a 4-way intersection in feel, regardless of whether that is with an all-way stop or roundabout, the two alternatives that do that are a positive change.

Jenn wrapped up the conversation and provided contact information for Jason and Ravi if there are other thoughts to share. She noted that we will be advancing preliminary plans for the preferred alternatives for the town to use to pursue the projects further.